



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Season's Final Snow Survey Scheduled Thursday *Low Readings Expected as Drought Continues*

SACRAMENTO – Department of Water Resources snow surveyors Thursday will take the year's final measurement of water content in the Sierra snowpack. Near-record low numbers are expected as California's drought pushes through its third year.

The May 1 survey is taken after the snowpack – which normally peaks in early April -- has begun to melt into streams and reservoirs with warming spring weather. Statewide, the April 1 “peak” this year was a dismal 32 percent of average water content for the date. And with the spring melt well under way, statewide electronic readings today indicate that statewide, snowpack water content is just 21 percent of the historical average. Even worse, electronic readings show a dismal 9 percent of average water content for the northern Sierra snowpack that helps fill the state's major reservoirs which currently are only half full. Electronic water content readings for the central and southern Sierra are 26 and 22 percent of normal, respectively.

Lake Oroville in Butte County, the State Water Project's (SWP) principal reservoir, today is at only 53 percent of its 3.5 million acre-foot capacity (66 percent of its historical average for the date). Shasta Lake north of Redding, California's and the federal Central Valley Project's (CVP) largest reservoir, also is at 53 percent of its 4.5 million acre-foot capacity (62 percent of its historical average). San Luis Reservoir, a critical south-of-Delta reservoir for both the SWP and CVP, is at 47 percent of its 2 million acre-foot capacity (52 percent of average for this time of year).

California's severe drought also is reflected in rainfall totals, measuring just over to below half of historic amounts in key watersheds.

With most of the wet season behind us, it is unlikely late-season storms will significantly dampen the effects of the three-year drought on parched farms or communities struggling to provide drinking water.

On April 25, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. issued an executive order to strengthen the state's ability to manage water and habitat effectively in drought conditions and called on all Californians to redouble their efforts to conserve water. In January, the Governor declared a drought state of emergency.

(Visit Drought.Ca.Gov for an update on how the state is dealing with the drought.)

The news media may accompany DWR snow surveyors near Echo Summit on Thursday. The site is Phillips Station at Highway 50 and Sierra at Tahoe Road, approximately 90 miles east of Sacramento. Reporters and photographers should park along Highway 50. Measurements will begin at 11 a.m. and results should be available by early afternoon.

Electronic snowpack readings are available on the Internet at:

<http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cdecapp/snowapp/sweq.action>

Electronic reservoir readings may be found at:

<http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cdecapp/resapp/getResGraphsMain.action>

For a broader snapshot of current and historical weather conditions, see DWR's "Water Conditions" and "Drought" pages:

Water Conditions Page

<http://www.water.ca.gov/waterconditions/>

Drought Page

<http://www.water.ca.gov/waterconditions/drought/>

For simple, every day water conservation tips, click on "Save Our Water" here:

